DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 084 304 TM 003 327

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TITLE	Caregiver Language Observation Instrument. Manual of Instructions and Definitions.
INSTITUTION	Illinois Univ., Urbana. Div. of Child Development and Family Relations.
NOTE	9p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Mary Knox Weir, University of Illinois, Division of Child Development and Family Relations, Urbana, Ill. 61801
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Care Workers; Day Care Services; Environment; Evaluation Techniques; *Expressive Language; *Infant Behavior; *Instrumentation; Language; *Observation
IDENTIFIERS	*Caregiver Language Observation Instrument

ABSTRACT

This manual describes the Caregiver Language Observation Instrument, a device useful for observing the language behavior of caregivers in infant day care settings. Eleven categories of language behavior are recorded: approval, disapproval, cautioning, soothing, talking to, questioning, labeling, elaborating, singing, directing, and imitating. The instrument also provides for data collection on the state of the child and the situation in which the child is functioning when the caregiver's language is observed. This manual provides instruction in the observation technique, the coding system, and a copy of the measure. (NE)

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Caregiver Language Observation Instrument

Manual of Instructions and Definitions

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I. Description

The Caregiver Language Observation Instrument provides a scheme for observing the language behavior of caregivers in infant day care settings within eleven categories. In addition to language observations the instrument provides for the collection of data on the state of the child and the situation in which the child is functioning when the language is observed.

To the right of the categories are vertical columns in which the frequency of language per ten seconds of time, the nature of the language and an identifying number for the child to whom the language is addressed is recorded. Each completed vertical column is a ten second interval. Twelve ten second intervals can be recorded on each sheet, or a total of two minutes.

II. Observation Procedure

The names of the infants to be observed are to be numbered and written on the left hand side of the lower portion of the data sheet. You must remain close enough to a caregiver to hear her language directed toward the infants. There will be times when she must be followed around as she performs the work necessary to care for infants in day care.

One caregiver is to be observed for a total of fifteen minutes or seven and one-half data sheets. The observer looks for ten seconds, records for twenty seconds, stopping at the end of a fifteen minute period for rest. Three fifteen minute observations for each caregiver are to be

recorded. If no language has been directed to an infant within a ten second period a zero is to be placed at the head of the column.

For each ten second observation the following must be done:

1. The correct category for the language heard must be determined.

2. The nature of the language, i.e. whether it is initiated by the caregiver (I) or a response to the infant who is aware and anticipating a response (R) must be determined.

3. A subscript of the number of the infant(s) to whom the language is addressed must be recorded such as I_4.

4. A notation of non-distress (N) or distress (D) for the state of the infant must be recorded. The position for this notation is directly below the category listings. If language is addressed to an infant in distress and one not in distress this is noted by a slash i.e. N/D.

5. A check must be made beside the situation in which the child is functioning. A list of these situations is located directly below distress/non-distress. If more than one situation is occurring when the language is observed all situations should be checked. For example an infant may be playing while another is being diapered. If both infants have language addressed to them either separately or as a group, both situations, play and diapering, are to be recorded.

III. Definition of terms.

1. Language of the caregiver. The language is to be coded as units. A unit of language is defined as a whole sentence, part of a sentence or an utterance. An utterance is coded as one unit if it occurs once or more than in a series such as tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, or oh, oh, oh, oh (one coding). More than one sentence or part of a sentence within a ten second period is to be coded each time it occurs even if the unit is repetitive of the category.

2. The nature of the language of the caregiver. Initiated language (I) on the part of the caregiver occurs when the infant is not aware of having done anything to cause the language occurrence. Responsive language (R) on the part of the caregiver occurs when the infant's behavior elicited the language from the caregiver and the infant indicates awareness or expectation of a response from the caregiver.

3. Categories for coding the language of the caregiver.

A. Approves: "That's such a good job drinking all your milk from the cup." "It's good of you to give it to Julie," "Yes, that's the way to put it on the shelf," "You've been such a good boy today" are all examples of verbal approval.

B. Disapproves: "No, no," "You mustn't grab the toy," "Don't crawl over there," "Take it out of your mouth"

are examples of verbal disapproval. Disapproval may appear in the form of a question "Why did you do that?" If the intent and tone is negative the language is to be coded not as a question but as disapproval.

C. Cautions: "Be careful, it might spill," "You'll fall down," "Watch out for her fingers" are examples of verbal cautions. They impose restraints on the infant's behavior but are not as emphatic as are verbal disapprovals.

D. Soothes: "It'll be all right," "Don't cry anymore," "We'll get a band aid," "Cooing" to a crying baby are examples of soothing language behaviors.

E. Talks to: language directed to an infant which is of a general nature. For example, "My it's lovely and sunny outside," or "Julie made us some bread today," "Here are your socks."

F. Questions: Questions are of two types, rhetorical and direct. A rhetorical question expects no response from the infant but is used to provide the child with information about what is to happen next. "Should we go outside now?", "Do you want some dinner now?", "Do you need your diaper changed?" are examples of rhetorical questions. A direct question expects a response from the infant. "Do you want this toy?" while handing the baby the toy and waiting for the child to take it, or "Do you want to go in for music now?" while waiting for the child to follow her.

G. Labels: giving names, descriptions, or actions for objects or persons including the actions of caregiver or

of the infant or of a toy. "That's a book" while the child is holding or looking at a book, "Pretty" to a doll or "Chipo is walking" as the infant takes the first few steps or "I'm hungry" says the bunny the caregiver is holding. "Peek-a-boo," "Here's baby's eyes, nose, mouth, etc.", "hide and seek," "facial games--tongue out noises, eye blinks, etc.", "Whee and throwing into the air or bouncing around" are examples of labeling actions when they are accompanied by language.

H. Imitating: Repeating a sound that the baby has just said which is a response to the baby's vocalizations. Imitating also involves saying sounds or words that the baby can and does say and requesting that the baby repeat the sounds.

I. Elaborating: using the baby's words and expanding the words or word into phrases or sentences. "Up" is expanded into "You want up" or "Cookie" into "You want a cookie," or "Tal" into "That's baby Tal."

J. Sings, reads, shows pictures can occur in a group or to the individual infant. Labeling pictures when reading a book or looking at pictures and talking is <u>not</u> to be scored under labeling. When the reading is to a group each infant's number should appear in the subscript.

K. Directs: "Put it on the shelf," "Give it to Cindy," "Get your shoe," "Put two hands on the cup, it will be easier" are examples of giving directions.

4. The state of the infant. Distress is identified by crying or fretting. Crying is defined as a behavior which is accompanied by vocalizing, grimacing, diffuse motor activity and red face. Fretting is the intermittent occurrence of crying behavior with less intensity.

Non-distress is identified by absence of distress usually accompanied by what is termed happiness or contentment.

5. The situation of the infant. Feeding is any time the infant receives food through a bottle, spoon, finger food. It does not include carrying around a cracker during play.

Dressing includes putting on and taking off clothes.

Diapering/toileting includes the time the infant is placed on the diapering table or in the crib waiting for the change to take place and including the time it takes to change the diaper. Toileting is when the infant is directed to the toilet until he is removed or removes himself.

Entering/leaving refers to the periods during which the infant is brought to the center and taken away from the center, usually by the parents or adult responsible for the infant when the infant is not at the center. It does not include leaving the center to take a walk during the course of the day care day. This is coded as play.

Waking/Sleeping refers to the period of time that the infant is waking up usually before diapering or toileting. Sleeping refers to the period when the infant is falling

asleep. Patting, rocking, holding while feeding can occur during this time. If feeding accompanies falling asleep, then both situations are checked.

Play refers to all other times not identified by the above mentioned routines.

DATE_____ CENTER_____ TEACHER_____ TIME_____

Code: I = initiates or R = responds after each language unit. Subscript 1, 2, 3, etc. identifies child. D = distress; N = non-distress.

Approves													
Disapproves													
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Enter/Leave													
Waking/Sleep													
Play													

Children: